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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/51/605/Add.1)]

51/180. Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 47/188 of 22 December 1992, 48/191 of 21 December 1993, 49/234 of 23 December 1994 and 50/112 of 20 December 1995 related to the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa,

Recalling also the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,[1]

Recalling further its resolution 50/114 of 20 December 1995, in which it recalled the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development set forth in chapter 12 of Agenda 21,[2] entitled "Managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought",

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[1] A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix II.

[2] See Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.I, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

Noting the ongoing work in preparation for the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention undertaken by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,

Noting with satisfaction that to date more than fifty countries have already ratified the Convention,

Recalling that, in accordance with article 22, paragraph 4, of the Convention,[1] the first session of the Conference of the Parties shall be convened by the interim secretariat of the Convention and shall take place not later than one year after the date of entry into force of the Convention,

Having considered the recommendations and decisions made by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its eighth and ninth sessions regarding the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,[3]

Having also considered the report of the Secretary-General[4] on the implementation of resolution 50/112 and on possible requirements for intergovernmental and secretariat work on the implementation of the Convention and its regional implementation annexes to respond effectively to the needs in the African, Asian and Latin American and the Caribbean regions,

Considering that the Convention is one of the most important achievements in the implementation of and follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992,

Taking into account the basic provisions of its resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985,

1. Welcomes the fact that, in conformity with article 36, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, the Convention will enter into force on 26 December 1996, and calls upon more countries to take appropriate action for the ratification, acceptance or approval of or accession to the Convention;

2. Urges the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, at its tenth session, to be held in New York from 6 to 17 January 1997, to aim at finalizing all the outstanding negotiating issues, including the negotiations of the two working groups and the plan for the preparatory work for the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

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[3] See A/51/76 and Add.1.

[4] A/51/510.

3. Recalls the decision contained in paragraph 4 of its resolution 50/112 and, in this context, takes note of paragraph 3 of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee decision 9/5 of 13 September 1996;[5]

4. Decides that the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention shall be held from 29 September to 10 October 1997;

5. Accepts with deep appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Italy to host in Rome, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

6. Decides to include the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1997-1998;

7. Requests the head of the interim secretariat to continue to promote cooperation and coordination with other relevant organizations and entities, particularly those of the United Nations system, in support of the regional implementation annexes, aimed, inter alia, at facilitating the efforts of affected developing country parties, particularly those in Africa, to fulfil their commitments under the Convention;

8. Urges all States, the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, and all other relevant organizations and actors, to take concrete actions and measures for the full and effective implementation of the provisions of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee resolution 5/1 of 17 June 1994 on urgent action for Africa,[6] as well as to promote actions for other affected developing countries and regions;

9. Notes the arrangements and contributions made by the Secretary-General and relevant organizations, funds and programmes active in the fields of desertification and drought;

10. Notes with appreciation the contributions made thus far to the Trust Fund established pursuant to resolution 47/188, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations to continue to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund to support the interim secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and the work of the Committee, and also for the transition period following the first session of the Conference of the Parties to support the secretariat of the Convention and the work of the Conference of the Parties;

11. Also notes with appreciation the contributions made to the Special Voluntary Fund established pursuant to resolution 47/188 to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiating process, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other organizations to continue to contribute generously to the Fund also for the transition period following the first session of the Conference of the Parties;

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[5] A/51/76/Add.1, annex, appendix II.

[6] See A/49/84/Add.2, annex, appendix III, sect. A.

12. Renews its appeal to Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, as well as to non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to continue to make contributions to relevant United Nations bodies, in order to strengthen their capacity to support activities to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in all affected developing countries and regions, particularly in Africa;

13. Requests the Secretary-General, subject to the decision of the Conference of the Parties at its first session, to consider:

(a) Authorizing the secretariat established pursuant to resolution 47/188 to act as secretariat for the transition period following the first session of the Conference of the Parties until the permanent secretariat designated by the Conference of the Parties begins operating, which should not be later than 31 December 1998;

(b) Maintaining the arrangements within the current programme budget for the interim secretariat to support the Convention beyond the first session of the Conference of the Parties until the permanent secretariat designated by the Conference of the Parties begins operating, which should not be later than 31 December 1998, and maintaining the arrangements relating to extrabudgetary funds;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Governments, the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and relevant institutions;

15. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to it, at its fifty-second session, on the implementation of the present resolution and on any possible implications arising from the report of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on its first session;

16. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session an item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa".

86th plenary meeting
16 December 1996